

## The Month With The Editor

*Notes, reflections, extracts from correspondence, comment upon medical and health news in both the scientific and public press, briefs of sorts from here, there and everywhere.*

### I See By the Papers That—

Another doctor has a \$20,000 judgment against him for "malpractice." The plaintiff had charged that his wife died as a result of an operation claimed to have been "unskillfully and erroneously performed."

Some doctors insure their homes against fire and their motor cars against everything, but are still too shortsighted to protect themselves against the increasing and unavoidable legal hazards of their profession.

—A San Francisco doctor "announces" that after "a year's experimentation at San Quentin penitentiary and a year's study in Europe," he has "learned an operation that corrects deviating eyes." The newspaper articles carries the pictures to prove it.

—Doctor Sir Arbuthnot Lane again occupies the headlines. This time he is helping the cancer quacks.

During recent years he has managed so as to be quoted as a sort of endorser by more than one species of cultist, but this cancer stuff he is feeding to the press will do untold harm.—See Mr. Ford's Dearborn Independent of June 20 for some of the details.

—The doctors of San Mateo, Burlingame and Hillsborough refused to give free treatment to the children of the well-to-do residents of these exclusive residential districts.

It appears that a school nurse had rounded up some 150 of these "poor little rich children" and called upon the doctors to render them "free" service, which the doctors quite properly refused to do.

—Some surgeons are adding to their notoriety by tattooing their initials on the patient's body. Let us hope that the tattooing is not always placed too close to the scar.

—A doctor's name was "posted" in his club for non-payment of his account. The doctor fastened to this posting a neatly typed sheet, headed "What's sauce for the doc is sauce for all the following" (here he listed the club members who owed him for services).

Whether "doc" got his money or not is not stated.

**Doctor, Have You Noticed** that practically all welfare movements requiring the services of physicians are promoted and administered by lay organizations that *dictate* medical policies?

It is quite possible, believes the editor of Ind. Med. Jour. that some of the paid employees of these organizations, who are basking in the limelight, would not be so enthusiastic if they lost some of their powers to dictate to doctors.

**Will They Take the Hint?**—"The child is not the mere creature of the state," declares the U. S. Supreme Court in declaring unconstitutional the Oregon School law.

This ought to be a blow to those uplifters who are meddling into the private, personal and sacred affairs of that fundamental unit of civilization—the home.

But will it? It will not. These meddlers will go on trying to formulate laws, rules and what not calculated to give them control over mating and the desirable and natural consequences of mating even to the extent of blazoning the most sacred of connubial matters upon official and other incorrectly called "confidential records."

One paragraph of the *unanimous* decision of the Supreme Court which should be engrossed and kept constantly before educational authorities, public health doctors and "welfare" organizations, reads:

"The fundamental theory of liberty upon which all

governments in this union repose, excludes any general power of the state to standardize its children by forcing them to accept instruction from public teachers only. The child is not the mere creature of the state; those who nurture him and direct his destiny have the right, coupled with the high duty, to recognize and prepare him for additional obligations."

**That Effective Apple**—"Didn't I see you going down the street the other day with an apple in your hand?"

"Quite so, old chap. I was going to call on the doctor's wife.

**DISEASE IS AN IMPEDIMENT TO THE BODY**, but not to the will, unless the will itself chooses. Lameness is an impediment to the leg, but not to the will. And add this reflection on the occasion of everything that happens; for you will find it an impediment to something else, but not to yourself.—Epictetus.

—This fundamental fact, like many others, is called obsolete by some of our modern faddist teachers and philosophers (?).

### COMMENTS BY AUTHORS AND READERS—

—"If my paper should be published, I suggest discussion by Dr. \_\_\_\_\_, Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ and Dr. \_\_\_\_\_. I am not at all sure that these gentlemen will agree with my opinions; nevertheless their decisions will be honest and of value."

—"I am sorry indeed that my overworked condition has made me so tardy in returning my manuscript and that you have had to write me so many times. Assuring you of my appreciation of your forbearance and considering myself constructively admonished, I am,"

—"When I returned the other day from a vacation to my office I found the May number of the CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE awaiting me. I have always been interested in medical history and I want to tell you and your co-workers how much I enjoyed the historical number. I would like to have one more copy for filing in my library."

"You surely publish one of the best journals in the U. S.—none better and sound editorials."—M. D., Indianapolis.

**After Over 300 Years of Effort** vital statistics of sorts are available for only about 80 per cent of our people.

If we show such speed in making progress where there is no controversy, how long will it take us to secure some of the "uniform laws" some are advocating about controversial subjects?

Suppose we should secure a uniform vaccination law, for example, would it be better enforced for that reason? Assuredly not.

Most health laws, "uniform" or otherwise, are largely disregarded. From 40 to 60 per cent of tuberculosis reported, for example, is reported from morgues. This in spite of long standing drastic laws on the subject.

The laws requiring the reporting of syphilis and gonorrhea are the jokes of the age.

**What School Children Are Taught**—An official government pamphlet based upon a study of what is being taught our school children about health, quotes, among others, the following extracts from the teachings in various states:

"Blood is of no use except as it is kept in circulation."

"The purpose of adenoids is to protect the child against disease."

"When the nose and throat are healthy, they produce a germicidal secretion which rids the incoming air of nearly all its bacteria."

But, why quote more?

**Bunking the Public** by dishonorable exploitation of false value is the keystone of a substantial share of current publicity.

Unfortunately this method is being employed by some who claim to be leading medical thought.

—“Hubby—‘What are you taking that patent medicine for—you’re well, aren’t you?’  
“Wife—‘Of course I am; but the advertisements of this dope are too attractive not to give it a trial.’”

**Indiana Has a New Law** which permits insurance companies to write policies of \$2500 or less *without medical examination*.

Doctors would do well to digest this fact in connection with the editorial in the February, 1925, issue of this magazine.

*There is more to this movement than is visible to the nearsighted.*

—But to go back to apples a moment, “Abe Martin says it’s jest about got so a doctor a day is cheaper’n apples.”

“Corns” was the Subject of a Hunterian lecture before the Royal College of Surgeons some time ago.

Dyspepsias, hemorrhoids, flatulence and a lot more so-called trivial illnesses should be similarly dignified and restored to the attention of physicians.

—In the aggregate these “minor ailments” constitute over 90 per cent of the limiting and partially disqualifying infirmities of man.

They supply the “fodder” for the “faddists.”

Recent References to Chiropractors as the “I knead you doctors” seems to us as particularly fitting.

**It May Be Significant** that the A. M. A. House of Delegates passed unanimously a resolution calling upon the government to remove the restriction upon the amount of alcohol a doctor may prescribe for a patient within a given time limit.

In the same connection it is of more than passing interest that the new forthcoming edition of the U. S. Pharmacopeia again admits both whisky and brandy among the approved drugs.

**Many Thoughtful People** are beginning to wonder if mass intellect has sunk to such a level that it will interest itself in nothing but exploited sensation and salaciousness and will accept no expression of opinion that does not flatter the prejudices and complacencies of the thoughtless and subliterate.

—Perhaps it is only a “dark of the moon” phase of a social cycle we are going through. Let us hope so. In the health field in any event, the “health fairy” has grown up into the Chamber of Commerce bathing beauty.

“The Jealous Doctor and the hungry lawyer are the two main causes of malpractice suits,” concludes the very active medico-legal committee of the Wayne County (Mich.) Medical Society after fourteen years of experience.

—*The committee’s figures show the significant fact of an annual average of more than one threat to sue for each 100 doctors.*

**Nothing Will So Quickly Kill** a really valuable procedure as to propagate a lot of wild and extravagant claims for it which are not and never could be justified by the facts.

—Too many are forgetting that this truth applies to matters pertaining to health as certainly as it does to “get rich quick procedures.”

**Isn’t It Stimulating to Read** that Ivan Petrovitch Pavlov, the Dean of Physiologists, is still at work in his researches, and, although over 75 years old, is producing some of his best work?

Let us hope that world affairs will soon be so that the output of this remarkable Russian may be again

more widely available than it has been during recent years.

**The Total Number of Accidents** reported to the California Industrial Accident Commission for 1924 was 206,131. Of these accidents 645 caused death, 1319 caused permanent disability and 87,982 caused temporary disability lasting longer than the day of the injury; 116,185 were no-disability accidents but *all required skilled medical treatment.*

Golfer—Doctor, you remember you recommended golf to take my mind off my work?

Doctor—Yes.

Golfer—Well, can you prescribe something now to get it back again?

**PLAY HAS BEGUN TO DOMINATE PHYSICAL EDUCATION**, believes John Sundwall. “One serious difficulty, however, with the play movement,” continues this authority, “is that it has become largely emotional, and when emotions dominate any movement there are dangers ahead.”

—Several new healing cults have already grown out of the so-called “physical education” movement.

—When the Romans tangled up one end of their play movement with medicine and the other end with work, the movement perished and took much of their civilization with it.

A negro was trying to saddle a fractious mule.

“Does that mule ever kick you, Sam?” asked a bystander.

“No, suh,” said Sam, “but he sometimes kicks whar I jes’ been.”

**The Doctor of the Future**—Advance sheets from the report of the Rockefeller Foundation show concern for the future of physicians:

The Foundation states that, “Probably three-quarters of all doctors today are general practitioners. There are people who assert that this type of physician is doomed; that he will disappear because he cannot compete with the specialist on the one hand and with preventive and social medicine on the other.

“Such an outcome is to be viewed with concern. The well-trained, properly equipped, experienced general practitioner of ability, character, and personality is a fundamentally valuable person.

“The stimulating philosophy of individualism, with its insistence upon independence, initiative, and ambition,” continues the report, “seems to be embodied in the general practitioner, who will survive only if he can win confidence and make a living.”

**Troublesome Tonsils**—It requires precisely the same education, training, experience and judgment to say intelligently that the tonsils of any child should come out, that is required to perform the operation.

The day is about over—except in backwood communities—when teachers and other technicians are going to disturb families and communities by advising tonsillectomies for school children.

Inadequately educated technicians would do less injury to health by doing the operation after the diagnosis had been made by a physician, than they do by making disturbing diagnoses and finding someone who will operate on their say so.

**Reflections of a Medical Teacher**—One of the greatest and most enduring professional pleasures of a medical teacher, believes J. G. Beardsley (Jour. Med. Soc. of N. J.), is the satisfaction of observing the deserved success that comes to former students. One of the disappointments in a teacher’s life is the realization that a proportion of the medical men whom one has watched, guided and admired as students have gradually degenerated into performing their professional work in a manner and by methods that are not a credit to their profession, their former teacher or to themselves.